COMMUNITY SCHOOL CONCEPTS IN RELATION TO SOCIETAL DETERMINANTS

BY

MILOSH MUNTYAN

B. S., University of Illinois, 1939

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AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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I. Problem and Method

Of the many programs offered in the attempt to meet the educational problem of our time, the community school concept represents the approach which most directly concerns itself with the elements in the educational problem. The elements of the problem are, of course, the society, the individual, and the school. The chief distinguishing characteristic of the community school lies in the fact that those who would subscribe to the community school concept see the school as an institution which serves to mediate directly between the society and the developing individual, accepting both the society and the individual for what they actually are at the moment and striving to so mediate between the two as to bring about a closer correlation between what they are and what the basic commitments of the social group would suggest that they become. There is implicit in this conception of the school a series of assumptions relative to all three of the elements in the problem—the society, the school, and the individual.

The basic assumption relative to the society is that ours is an inadequately integrated, perhaps disintegrating, society whose chief operative common commitment is to democratic process. The assumptions relative to the school and society fit into the pattern suggested by the analysis offered in *The Community School,*[1] including the beliefs that: All life is educative; education necessitates participation; adults and children have basic common purposes in both work and play; the schools should be fundamentally concerned with improving both community living and the societal structure; the curriculum should be derived basically from the major

[1]Everett, Samuel (editor), *The Community School,* New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938, pp. 435-57.

problems and areas of society; public education should be democratic in both processes and ideals; the purposes of education and community living are best met through developing common concerns among individuals and social groups; the schools are responsible for serving both children and adults.

Taking these assumptions and beliefs to be the root concepts defining the community school, and accepting them at face value, leaves the problem of determining which practicing, or practiced, school programs qualify as fundamentally community centered, whether or not they were or are commonly referred to as community schools. Because there has been no previous systematic attempt made to categorize the various possible approaches to the development of a community school, it is essential to determine, through a study of the literature in the field, the root practices and procedures which underlay community school activity, in order to make plain what the concept actually entails. In ascertaining the methods and aims of each type of program or practice that has been employed in developing a community school, it becomes apparent that there are three major concepts involved in the structuring of the school: (1) making the school an ideal community; (2) using community activities as the core of the school program; and (3) taking the school out into the community itself.

The first of these concepts is clearly concerned with what is commonly referred to as organization and administration. The second and third are concerned with the curriculum, or school program. Each of them, however, has several facets. In trying to make an ideal community of the school, the points of orientation are: (1) developing the community relationship between the professional school group and the lay public; (2) developing the community relationship between members of the professional school group, including teachers, administration, and school board; and (3) developing the community relationship between the

pupils and the professional school staff. In using community activities as the core of the school program, the points of orientation are: (1) using community activities primarily for school purposes; (2) using community activities primarily for community purposes; and (3) using community activities for school-community purposes. In taking the school out into the community itself, the same points of orientation hold, it being possible for the school to use the community for: (1) school purposes; (2) community purposes; or (3) school-community purposes.

Once the elements of the community school concept are set forth, the task which remains, and it is the major task, is the determination of the consistency maintained between the premises of the position as a departure point, the approach as a method, and the consequents, in terms of school structure, as the ends of the various programs. It is also necessary to investigate the possibility that there are still further consequents of the community school concept which have not been recognized or explicitly stated by those proposing such a school.

Since a major premise common to those who have proposed community schools is that the society which they would serve is inadequately integrated, the question as to the source of the school's authority is of primary significance. Not only must there be some commonly accepted source of authority, for the school to operate at all, in a community sense, but there must also be a commonly accepted process by means of which that authority can be translated in terms of the operation of the school. The location of authority must be such as to justify the school's operating as an integrative institution and must also be such as to stay within the limits of the authority patterns commonly acceptable to the total group in the society.

The analysis of the various approaches taken in developing community schools yields at least partial evaluations of these approaches which, when the evaluations are supple-

mented by the analysis of the authority relation between school and society, leads to a broadened conception of the community school structure.

II. Conclusions

It is obvious that no one of the three major concepts which serve to define the broad structure of the community school can, in and of itself, be taken to constitute the sufficient condition for the structuring of a community school. Each of them is a necessary condition, but the sufficient conditions are met only when all three are co-functioning. Moreover, all three must be functioning in their best and fullest sense if they are to constitute, jointly, the sufficient conditions for the operation of a community school. The organization and administration of the school can be characterized as community-operating only when the community relationship between school staff members, school staff and lay groups, and school staff and pupil groups is realized. If any of these three community relationships is not realized, there may be a partial community function fulfilled in the organization and administration of the school, but there will certainly not be a complete community function fulfilled. The school program will be community oriented and community functioning, in the sense in which school and community are taken to be co-functioning, desirably educative agencies, only when community activities are brought into the school, and the school moves out into the community for various aspects of its program, for school-community purposes. If the emphasis in either case is solely on school purposes or solely on community purposes, the basic premises of the community school concept are denied, either wholly or partially.

The conflict which besets those who would develop community schools, a conflict which is inherent in their basic sociological premise, arises from the fact that they would have the school function as a community institution, serving,

as it is commonly taken to serve, a community function even though it operates in a non-communal society. Although the problem of authority indicated here obviously must be resolved if the community school is to function, a thoroughgoing treatment of the problem is conspicuously lacking in discussions of community schools.

The traditional school has avoided this conflict, the definition of authority, through the device of assuming an air of neutrality which is, in practice, a "pseudo-neutrality"[2] operating on behalf of a particular segment of the society.[3] The community school, by definition, cannot resort to such a device without denying its own premises, since it hopes to serve the totality of the social group. The resolution of this question of the school's authority, then, is possible only as we can analyze the authority relations inherent in the society itself, translating this analysis in terms of the authority function of the school.[4]

The authority function is characterized by a three-fold relationship. There is the bearer, or symbol, of authority; the subject, the individual or group undergoing authority; and the field of authority which the bearer symbolizes. The crucial point to be made is that the bearer of authority, the expert, symbolizes the field of authority, but the authority actually rests in the field, not in the symbolizing expert. Furthermore, the authority function is not defined solely by the expert, since the individual undergoing authority, the subject, has a very real impact on that definition through

[2]National Society of College Teachers of Education, 28th Yearbook, *The Discipline of Practical Judgment in a Democratic Society*, Kenneth D. Benne, George E. Axtelle, B. Othanel Smith, and R. Bruce Raup, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943, pp. 44-45.

[3]Warner, W. Lloyd, Havighurst, Robert J., and Loeb, Martin B., *Who Shall be Educated?*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944, p. 56.

[4]The analysis of the authority function, as such, which follows is based on Benne, Kenneth D., *A Conception of Authority*, New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, Contributions to Education, No. 895, 1943, 227 pp.

his acceptance, rejection, or partial modification of the authority function he is undergoing. Furthermore, it is necessary to clearly define the field of authority being symbolized, just as it is necessary to define clearly the roles of the bearer and subject of authority. The bearer of authority who *practices* his expertness on the subject, e. g., a surgeon and his patient, symbolizes an *expert authority* which does not aim at the involvement of the subject in the field of authority, i. e., does not make a surgeon of the patient. However, the bearer of authority who offers the field of authority to the subject, e. g., a surgeon and a medical student, symbolizes a *pedagogical, community* authority, i. e., makes of the medical student a member of the "community" of surgeons. Co-functioning with either of these two types of authority, there is a third type, the authority of the *rules of the game.* The distinction drawn between the authority of the expert and the authority of the community—pedagogical authority—reflects the difference in the authority relation, and the difference in the consequent of the consummation of that relation, as it applies in the case of the traditional school as opposed to the community school broadly conceived.

In the traditional school situation the teacher functions, to a certain extent, as symbol of the pedagogical authority of the community, but the commonly, and perhaps unconsciously, accepted definition of the field of the teacher's authority is such as to narrowly circumscribe the "community" whose pedagogical authority the teacher symbolizes. This narrow conception of the teacher's field of authority leads to the induction of youth, to whatever degree the teacher is successful in carrying out the authority role, into the narrow "community" which the individual teachers represent—the community of English teachers as English teachers, the community of mathematicians symbolized by mathematics teachers, and so on. The assumption is that the youth, when properly inducted into the narrow "communities" of the individual, specialist subject fields of the

teachers, are thereby inducted into membership in the broader, potential "great community". There is reasonable ground for arguing that this analysis of the consequents of the consummation of the authority relationship in the traditional school has considerable meaning, also, for the consequents of the relationship inherent in certain of the concepts of the community school when they are taken in isolation from the further concepts which have been, by implication at least, presented as mutually supplementary. The potential difference between traditional schools and community schools lies in the fact that when the several individual concepts of the community school are brought together and molded into a uniform whole which is taken as the basis for the organization of the school and for the determination of the program, including the broad pattern of method, the authority relationship undergoes complete transformation and becomes fundamentally pedagogic in nature, the expert function being subordinated to, or being involved in directly serving, the pedagogic function. That is to say, the teacher's field of authority is no longer roooted in the specialized areas of knowledge as such, but rather is rooted in the total community process, the consummation of the authority relationship in the school, as it applies to general education, then being the involvement in the on-going life processes of the total community.

There are, however, two points at which this reconstructed conception of the school's, or teacher's, authority can be challenged. First, no one individual is adequate to the task of symbolizing, in a pedagogic sense, the authority of the admittedly complex "total community". Second, and this objection underlies, as much as it is an extension of, the first point, there is no "community", in the sense of the moral rather than the simple geographic community, which can be mediated for the student by any authority no matter how broad the field of authority may be taken to be.

The first of these objections necessitates a restatement

of the teacher's expert status. First, the redefined expertness of the teacher represents an expansion and elaboration, rather than a negation, of the commonly accepted teacher authority. The mastery of an area of knowledge, although it must be re-oriented toward the functional community rather than being allowed to maintain its present orientation toward the specialist association, is still a significant aspect of the teacher's expert status. Second, what is commonly referred to as teaching skill, although it must necessarily be reconstructed in terms of group methods and group processes and must also extend to lay groups in the community, will remain as a significant item of teacher expertness. Third, a major element in the teacher's expertness must become that of developing the judgmental process in and with pupils. Fourth, the teacher needs a certain expertness in the knowledge and application of philosophy, psychology, sociology, and the biological sciences as they underlie the educative process, but this knowledge must be, as in the case of the mastery of a subject matter area, oriented and applied toward the functional educational and social community rather than toward the specialist association represented by each of the disciplines. Finally, and most necessarily, the teacher needs an expertness in the knowledge, understanding, and interpretation of the fundamental commitments of the "greater community", an expertness which would seem to be the first qualification of the teacher in a community school.

This latter qualification makes of the teacher an expert with respect to the core of the culture, which presumably he must be in order to function adequately in a community school, but it denies him total expertness in that the variables of the culture are neither suggested nor defined by the core, although they are to a certain extent circumscribed by it. On this basis, the expertness, or potential expertness, of lay groups or of members of lay groups, is necessarily functional in the planning of the school and school program, supplementing the teacher's expertness even as it denies the teacher the

totality of the expert function. It is on this basis, also, that the community concept of organization and administration is justified.

The recurring question, however, is concerned with the basis on which non-integrated, non-communal lay groups can become co-functional with each other, and with the school, for common purposes. The answer would seem to lie in the structure of the society itself. Any society operates, if it operates at all for any common purpose, i. e., if it maintains some semblance of integration, on the basis of what have been called the "rules of the game". That is to say, social relationships—the game of living together—are defined by the common acceptance of a social structure and the principles underlying that social structure. The structure and principles that a group accepts define how that group will live together, what "game" will be played. In our society, the "game" we are committed to is generally referred to as democratic living, a major characteristic of which is the "rule" that changes in the rules of the game are permissible insofar as the group can agree on desirable changes. Furthermore, our chief common commitment seems to be that of adherence to the fundamental rule in our "game", the "rule" of democracy and democratic process. In consequence, we can accept with a certain equanimity the truth of the statement that the rules are a part of, rather than being outside of, the game; that without rules, there is no game; that with different rules, there is a different game.[5] Insofar as we maintain the fundamentally structuring rule, our commitment to democracy and democratic process, we have the basis on which non-integrated groups can become co-functioning in the effort to gain democratic ends democratically pursued. Furthermore, changes in secondary or tertiary "rules", insofar as they do not operate to subvert the basic democratic rule, can operate to refine both the superstructure and the base of democracy. Moreover, in our

[5]Dewey, John, *Experience and Education*, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1938, p. 56.

declaration of intention to play the "game" of democracy we are committed to weighing proposed changes in secondary or tertiary rules against the fundamentally structuring "rule"—democracy. On any other basis, changes in the rules might readily lead to a perversion of the game itself, a step which we clearly deny ourselves in our still common commitment to the "game" of democracy.

The foregoing argument indicates the basis on which non-integrated groups (including the school group as separate from lay groups) can become co-functioning groups, but it has not indicated the process through which the divergent points of view can be commonly oriented. The process, which has been called the "judgmental process",[6] includes these steps: (1) the rules of democracy make it both mandatory and desirable that judgments in any situation be made only in the light of as complete an overview of the total situation as the individual or group involved in a conflict can obtain; (2) the various ideals and aspirations embodied in the beliefs of the several groups involved in a conflict would have to be made plain if a common set of ideals and aspirations is to result; (3) the conceptions of the privileges and obligations of the individual and specific group must be weighed over against the privileges and obligations which attach to the total potential community; (4) the existing facts in the case would need to be brought to light; (5) it would be necessary to keep in mind both the possibility and practicality of reconstructing the conflict in terms of either the idealized goals of any conflict group or of an evolved idealized goal representing the resolution of the conflict in goals; (6) the biases or prejudices of the various individuals or groups involved in the conflict would have to be recognized; (7) finally and ultimately, the entire conflict, and the proposals for resolution of the conflict, must be judged in terms of the whole congeries of "rules"

[6]The process here outlined is based on "Part II. Toward Principles of Method in Practical Judgment" of the 28th Yearbook, National Society of College Teachers of Education, *op. cit.*

which constitute the ways of the group and which structure the group itself. Without this final step, a given conflict might well be taken to be resolved in and of itself when actually the "resolution" constitutes an equal, or perhaps greater, conflict with other of the "rules" which govern the group. It is to this whole body of rules that the school group must refer in seeking its authority to operate in a conflict situation. In the same way, non-integrated groups seeking to reconcile their differences have no real alternative other than to refer to this body of rules. Only through this process can the school effectively operate as a communal institution serving the potential community, and only through this process can non-integrated groups effectively reach some semblance of "community".

III. Summary

The sum of the case can be put rather simply. The community school serves a direct community function through helping solve community problems, through helping develop community, and through helping develop community process. It can hope to accomplish this properly only as the school becomes a community and exemplifies community processes in its staff, staff-lay, and staff-pupil relationships, even while it uses community activities and problems and takes the school group into the community life for school-community purposes. It must personify, in its structure and operation, the authority of the community, serving the total community —adults as well as pupils. It must deal with community conflicts and problems, using various experts in the community as resource people whose lay expertness is integrated with the school's efforts by the corps of expert teachers. The development of judgmental process must be primary, to a large extent, for pupils and to a certain extent for adults, even while the "product" of the school's efforts serves as an evaluation of the process. Finally, the school cannot identify itself only with the immediate community, since

the "rules of the game" which structure the local community are regional and national in scope, rather than being the private property of the local community. Effective community can be developed and maintained only as the community relationship between the local, the regional, and the national and international groups is recognized and furthered.

VITA

Milosh Muntyan was born March 11, 1917, in Madison, Illinois. He attended the public schools in Granite City, Illinois. In 1935 he entered the University of Illinois and was awarded the Bachelor of Science degree in 1939 and the Master of Science degree in 1940. He taught in the high school at Manteno, Illinois, subsequently, until he enlisted for military service in 1941. He was in the Armed Forces for more than four years, serving chiefly as a flying officer and as Tests and Measurements Officer with the Central Navigator's Instructor School of the Army Air Corps. He returned to the University of Illinois in the Fall of 1945, completing his work for the degree of Master of Education and serving as a Research Assistant with the University's High School Testing Bureau. While continuing his graduate work in 1946, he first served as a Research Assistant with the University's Bureau of Educational Research, then joined the teaching staff of the College of Education. In the Fall of 1947 he will join the faculty of the School of Education, University of Delaware, as Assistant Professor of Education.